

return he contributed to this journal (*Ibis*, 1876, pp. 17-20) a paper containing remarks on 113 species of birds obtained or identified in that island. Thence he proceeded to Vannes, in Brittany, which he made his headquarters for exploring Belle Ile and the neighbouring islets in search of the Roseate Tern, and, though unsuccessful, he undoubtedly deserved success. Subsequently he made excursions—chiefly in spring, for he was a keen birds'-nester—to the valley of the Seine and some of the forests of Normandy, to Holland, and to the Hebrides &c. in Great Britain. At his home at Hounsdown, near Totton, Hants, on the borders of the New Forest, he continued to study birds up to the close of his life, and his garden was well stocked with nesting-boxes, at which he could observe at leisure the habits of his feathered favourites. He wrote little, but he was emphatically a field-naturalist.

XLVIII.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed “to the Editors of ‘The Ibis’”:

SIRS,—In your notice of Mrs. Blackburn’s ‘Birds from Moidart and elsewhere’ (*Ibis*, 1896, p. 263), you quote the following observations from that book:—“In the young Grey-backed Crow the eyes are blue. I do not know if it is so in the Black Carrion Crow”; and you add, “Nor do we at this moment, though we incline to think that the irides in the latter are dark.” Up to the present all the Crows I have examined have been too young at the time of their death to show the colour of the irides properly; but the other day my brother-in-law brought me the head of a well-fledged young Carrion Crow, and I can now state that the irides are bluish-grey.

Yours, &c.,

Bloxham, Oxon,
May, 1897.

O. V. APLIN.

SIRS,—An Albatross, which has since been identified as *Diomedea melanophrys*, was caught on the Streetley Hall farm, near Linton, in Cambridgeshire, on July 9th, by a labourer named Samuel Barker, who killed and took it to

Mr. S. Owen Webb, of Streetley Hall, who forwarded it, under the impression that it was a species of Gull, to Mr. Travis, taxidermist, Bury St. Edmund's, for preservation. The bird, when captured, was uninjured and in very good condition, bore no marks of captivity, but seemed simply exhausted. On hearing of it through the Rev. G. Julian Tuck, Mr. J. H. Gurney and I examined it, and asked Mr. Travis to forward it to Mr. Howard Saunders, who submitted it to Mr. Osbert Salvin, when it was pronounced to belong to the above species.

It is, I believe, the first instance of the occurrence of an Albatross in the British Isles, though a bird of the same species was shot in the Færoe Islands (Ibis, 1896, p. 136), and others are referred to by Mr. J. A. Harvie-Brown, as well as by Mr. H. L. Popham ('Zoologist,' 1894, pp. 337-338), as having been met with in that same portion of the Atlantic Ocean. In the present specimen the superciliary mark is almost absent, and is merely represented by an indistinct tinge of grey on the feathers over and in front of the eye, in which respect it seems to resemble the one killed in the Færoes. There is another peculiarity which, strange to say, is not mentioned in the British Museum Catalogue (vol. xxv. p. 447), and that is that the whole of the outer web of the outside tail-feather is white or whitish, a very conspicuous feature when the tail is spread*.

The following note was made by Mr. Gurney and myself from the specimen shortly after it was mounted:—

	Inches.
Length, following outline of mounted specimen along the back, from tip of beak to end of tail	26·3
Wing, closed, from bend to tip	17·0
Bill, along ridge to tip, following the curve	4·2
Tarsus, in front	2·4
Tarsus, behind	2·9
Expanse (<i>teste</i> Mr. Travis), about	84·0
Number of tail-feathers twelve.	

* [After this letter had been sent to press, we found that an almost identical notice had been supplied to 'The Field,' and appeared on August 28th.—EDD.]

Soft parts, as described by Mr. Travis, and so far as we could judge ourselves:—Bill pale lemon-yellow along the culmen, passing into brownish black at the bend towards the tip for about 1 inch. The extreme tip for about half an inch pale whitish horn-colour, remainder brownish orange. Legs and feet fleshy blue.

Yours, &c.,

E. A. BUTLER, Lt.-Col.

Brettenham Park, Ipswich,
25th August, 1897.

The Melodious Warbler (*Hypolais polyglotta*) in *Sussex*.—In Bulletin xlv. of the British Ornithologists' Club it was stated (see 'Ibis,' *suprà*, p. 452) that Mr. N. F. Ticehurst had exhibited a specimen of the Icterine Warbler (*Hypolais icterina*) shot at Burwash, in Sussex, and in the 'Zoologist' for last July he mentioned a second and smaller Warbler, shot at the same time and place. The description of the latter pointed strongly to *H. polyglotta*, and this the bird proved to be on examination, Mr. G. Bristow, of St. Leonard's, having obligingly sent both the specimens to Saunders for inspection. The *H. polyglotta* proved to be a male by dissection; the Icterine Warbler was a female; while, as a matter of detail, the date was April 30th, and not May 1st, which was the day the birds were received, together with various small birds shot by the same person.

The occasional visits of *H. polyglotta* to the British Islands have been suspected for some time. On May 26th, 1886, the Rev. Allan Ellison saw and heard a bird, which probably belonged to this species, in Co. Wicklow, Ireland; while during the same summer the Rev. Murray A. Mathew often watched and listened to a similar bird, which he describes in his 'Birds of Pembrokeshire,' p. 9. In 1893 an egg, which, from its small size and rich pink colour, seemed to belong to *H. polyglotta*, was sent to Saunders as one of a clutch taken near Lancing, Sussex, and there was evidence that the bird had nested there for two consecutive years, until a boy from the College went forth expressly to slay it with

a catapult, succeeded only too well, tried to skin it (for he was aware of its value), failed, and threw the mangled remains away.

The Melodious Warbler has a western range, and completely takes the place of the Icterine in Spain and Portugal, as well as in France to the west of Savoy and the Rhone valley, up to about the mouth of the Seine. Eastward the Icterine predominates, even when not the sole representative, and Tunisia seems to be the meeting-place of both species. The Melodious Warbler is not only smaller, but has a proportionately shorter wing, with an absolutely larger bastard-primary, while the second quill is shorter than the fifth, whereas the reverse is the case with *H. icterina*.—II. S.

The Production of "Aigrettes."—The demand for ladies' "aigrettes" seems to have instigated attempts to keep Egrets in captivity for the purpose of producing these much-coveted feathers. In a recent number of the 'Bulletin of the Société Nationale d'Acclimatation de France' (1896, p. 302), M. Olivier gives an account of a visit paid to an establishment near Tunis, where a number of Egrets (*Ardea garzetta*) were kept in captivity in a large enclosed aviary furnished with trees and water. They nest there, rearing two broods, in April and June, and are fed very cheaply on horseflesh, the young birds at first requiring small fishes, with which the mother feeds them. The precious side-plumes, so valued for ladies' hats, are shorn twice a year, in May and September, the best plumes being those of May. Each bird supplies about seven grammes in the year, which realize about 35 francs. This sum, after deducting expenses, gives a net gain of 22 francs per bird.

New Expedition to the Galápagos.—We learn from 'Science' that an expedition under the charge of Mr. C. M. Harris, of Augusta, Maine, has sailed from San Francisco for the Galápagos Islands, with a view to studying their fauna and flora. It is stated that the expenses are defrayed by the Hon. Walter Rothschild.